

(Ft. Lauderdale, FL) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement on the one-year anniversary of the enactment of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* :

"One year ago today, the United States enacted the *Affordable Care Act* as a promise to the American people that affordable, quality health care would no longer be a privilege for some, but a guaranteed right for all. Millions of Americans have already benefited from the *Affordable Care Act*, which improves health security, increases insurer accountability, lowers health care costs, guarantees more health care choices, and enhances quality of care. In fact, 32 million more Americans now have health care coverage, and middle class, working poor, and other vulnerable Americans are enjoying new protections and benefits.

"In my home state of Florida alone, the positive impact of the *Affordable Care Act* has been tremendous. Floridians have more freedom and control over their health care choices because of the *Affordable Care Act*. In particular, the health care reform law has provided:

- 3.3 million Medicare beneficiaries in Florida with free preventive services;
- 255,996 residents who have hit the "donut hole" with \$250 tax-free rebates, and a 50 percent discount when buying brand-name prescription drugs;
- Up to 289,995 small businesses with tax credits for purchasing coverage for employees;
- \$110.4 million in health care funding and grants to the State;
- Protection for 960,000 kids with pre-existing conditions;

- Protection from lifetime limits on health benefits for 9.3 million Florida residents with private plans;
- Protection for 1.2 million Florida residents who buy health insurance on the individual market from coverage denial when they get sick;
- Greater value for their premium dollars for 9.3 million Florida residents with private plans;
- Protection from unreasonable premium increases;
- 280,000 Floridians with the ability to retire before they became eligible for Medicare;
- Access to more funding for 360 community health centers throughout Florida.

"Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues continue their efforts to dismantle the *Affordable Care Act* at the expense of the middle class. While I recognize the need to address the so-called 1099 reporting provision, increasing taxes on low-income individuals and families is not the answer. Furthermore, I was especially concerned by Florida Governor Rick Scott's decision in February to return \$1 million in federal funds awarded to assist the state with implementing the *Affordable Care Act*. His continued obstinacy regarding health care reform is not only irresponsible, but detrimental to the well-being of countless Floridians.

"As we reflect on the state of health care reform in our nation, we must also not forget the true task that remains before us – creating more jobs. The *Affordable Care Act* actually creates between 250,000 and 400,000 jobs each year while also cutting the deficit by billions of dollars. Simply put, investing in our nation's health care system is good medicine for our long-term fiscal health.

"Without a doubt, the *Affordable Care Act* represents one of the most significant pieces of legislation in our nation's history. However, comprehensive health care reform does not end here. We can and must do more to move our country forward, not take it back. I remain committed to working with my colleagues in Congress to do just that."

As a Member of Congress since 1992, Hastings has always advocated for smart, comprehensive, and sustainable health care reform. In the 111th Congress alone, he sponsored and co-sponsored over 200 health-related bills in order to increase health care affordability, access, and quality, and has led and supported efforts to facilitate better health care at home in his Congressional district and for the nation as a whole. Hastings also introduced legislation to bring fair competition to the drug market and increase patient access to affordable generic medications; increase access to voluntary screening for HIV/AIDS and STIs as well as other preventive services, especially for groups that have been historically underrepresented in public health interventions; and establish a commission designed to construct a comprehensive national strategy on how to increase the affordability, accessibility, and effectiveness of long-term care and community services.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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